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SHREVEPORT BUSINESS MAN PLEADS GUILTY IN FEDERAL COURT

Guilty plea related to Department of Community Development loan

Shreveport, Louisiana . . . United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced that **RODERICK CASTON**, age 37, of Shreveport, pleaded guilty today before United States District Judge S. Maurice Hicks, Jr. to theft of public money. Sentencing for CASTON has been scheduled for July 26, 2006.

An indictment was returned in January of this year charging CASTON with one count of theft of public money. Testimony at today's hearing established that in February 2001 CASTON obtained a loan from the City of Shreveport Department of Community Development to build a car wash in Shreveport, but converted the loan proceeds for his personal use rather than for the purposes which it was intended. The loan was never repaid. Department of Community Development loans are funded by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

U.S. Attorney Washington stated: "Today's guilty plea is part of a broad inquiry into the use of federal Community Development Funds disbursed by the City of Shreveport and our investigation is on-going."

CASTON faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, or both.

Sentencing in federal court is determined by the discretion of federal judges and the governing statute. United States Sentencing Guidelines established by the United States Congress and the United States Sentencing Commission are only used as guidelines by the judge in determining the appropriate sentence. Parole has been abolished in the federal system.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Caddo Parish Sheriff's Office, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Shreveport Resident Agency. The case is being prosecuted by First Assistant U.S. Attorney Bill Flanagan and Assistant U.S. Attorney Alexander C. Van Hook.

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